

The House on Lancaster Road

Blackberry vines, broken laurel, and Scotch broom
surround the peeling house set on a slope above the road.
Built in '53, added onto in '74, the place has seen three families
passing through like generations of crows and blue jays.

Tall firs and cedars shadow the roof, and moss grows deep.
An ancient pear tree still bears fruit, or it doesn't.
One year a young man drives up to call on the woman living there.
He sees what needs to be cleared away and built.

They inhabit the house together, and smoke rises like the moon.
The pendulums of antique clocks swing more slowly here.
Dwelling there is who they are, and they are always learning to dwell
in this house, to occupy its wooden bed, table, and chairs.
They stoke a hearth where bitter winter branches burn.

In March the old man spades and rakes to build
mounds of composted earth to host lettuce and potatoes.
The woman delights in growing things and plants
seeds of cosmos that will tickle the blooming granddaughter.

One year the rain will find them gone. The garden
will go back to blackberry vines, broken laurel, and Scotch broom.
The energy of God, coiled in dark earth,
awaits the human work of care to spiral into waiting sky.

Bill Siverly

from *Steptoe Butte*, Windfall Press, 2013